



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

At Wallace, we are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for our students and endeavour to provide an environment in which pupils feel safe, valued and welcome.

We consistently strive to achieve a target of 100% for our young people. This goal is promoted in School and rewarded during assemblies throughout the year. Improving attendance is also celebrated.

It is well established that young people who attend school regularly find learning more satisfying, make better progress socially and academically and make more successful transitions from school into higher education, training & employment.

For your child to reach their full educational achievement and take full advantage of the educational opportunities here, it is vital that your child is at school.

We know and accept that there are times when a young person cannot attend school due to illness, personal circumstances or other commitments.

When attendance drops below 95% (9 days in a year) research shows that there is a corresponding drop in academic and social progress.

We need your support at this stage and request that you make every effort to keep us informed immediately of any safeguarding, medical or other pastoral issues so that we can plan the best support possible for each student whose education is being negatively impacted.

The School and parents have legal responsibilities to ensure that young people attend school, regularly, that young people's absence is accounted for promptly and this policy should be read in conjunction with the parent responsibilities laid out by the Department of Education, The Education Authority and the Education Welfare service along with the School's other published policies.

The School will require independent evidence of any particular circumstances to verify your claim that they are impacting negatively on your child's attendance.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

1. Promote good attendance & punctuality.
2. Reward good or improving attendance.
3. Reduce absence & lateness.
4. Ensure that all students reach their full potential.
5. Ensure parents and guardians understand the statutory and pivotal role they play in ensuring good attendance.
6. Ensure parents understand the role of the Educational Welfare Service in supporting the School in maintaining high levels of attendance for all students.

Roles & Responsibilities – Pupils, Parents & Staff

The Role of Parents

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

We expect our parents to make every effort to ensure that their child attends school and is punctual.

All parents are asked to:

- be familiar with the school times & procedures regarding absence and avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent appointments.
- communicate with the school where safeguarding, medical or pastoral issues exist which may impact on their child's attendance or punctuality.
- support the school's 100% attendance targets and support the school when sanctions or referrals are required for poor attendance.
- Familiarise themselves with their statutory responsibilities to ensure their child attends School regularly and is punctual.

Attendance will be recorded and analysed to ensure attendance concerns are identified at an early stage so that pastoral or academic support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

What to do if your child is absent?

- If your child is absent you must telephone the school and speak to the Front Office staff as soon as possible on their first day of absence.
- When your child returns to school after a period of absence you must complete the digital absence form available on our website to explain their absence and submit it on their first day back at school.

Our expectations of our students

We expect our students to attend every day in time for registration.

Registration takes place each morning from 8.50am until 9.10am.

When the first school bell rings at 8.45 am students should make their way to their class assembly rooms for registration with their class tutor.

Years 8-12

At 8.50 am all students are required to be in their Class Assembly rooms with their Class tutor for registration.

Sixth Form

Year 13 & 14 students register using their attendance barometric readers in the front foyer and in the Sixth Form Centre once they arrive in school each day. Students should register daily in this way before 8:50am.

Students who have permission to miss registration due to another school commitment (e.g. music, sport) are reminded to register at the Front Office when they arrive in school and no later than 8.50am.

The Role of Staff

At Wallace our staff promote and reward good attendance and ensure that all students are clear about the procedures regarding absence and punctuality and apply the procedures fairly and consistently.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance.

Absence from School Action Plan

At Wallace, we have a duty of care to ensure your child's safety, regular school attendance and have clear and consistently applied attendance procedures.

To ensure parents and the School can each fulfil their statutory requirements the following process will be followed.

Years 8-12

Stage 1 - attendance below 95%

If a pattern of absence is detected or if the attendance rate **falls below 95%**, except where the absence is clearly the result of illness, for which there is independent evidence, your child's Head of Year will contact home and send an attendance concern letter/email.

Stage 2 - attendance below 90%

If a pattern of absence continues or the attendance rate **falls below 90%**, except where the absence is clearly the result of illness, for which there is independent evidence, a parental interview will be conducted and documented by your child's Head of Year in school to establish the reason(s) for the absences.

At this meeting the Head of Year will discuss support, set targets for improvement but also discuss Educational Welfare Service intervention should attendance continue to fall. There will be an attendance review in 2 weeks.

Stage 3- attendance below 85%

As the attendance rate **is now below 85%**, there is persistent absence and lost learning. Except where the absence is clearly the result of illness, for which there is independent evidence, a referral will be made by the School to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

In addition to a referral to The Education Welfare Service the School will proceed as follows if the situation does not improve:

Stage 4 - attendance below 80%

Parents will be written to and invited to attend an Attendance Panel Review meeting with members of the School's Leadership Team at which next steps will be planned.

This is a very serious matter at this stage and the parent and young person involved will be required to agree an improvement contract, notwithstanding any independent evidence of reasons to justify the significant absence. Unless there are specific reasons identified and documented for the unacceptable levels of attendance the parent and student will be required to complete an Action Plan and Contract with targets for improvement in attendance and punctuality.

Stage 5 – attendance below 70%

Parents will be required to attend an Attendance Panel of the Board of Governors to which representatives of the Educational Welfare Service will be invited. A range of strategies and actions will be discussed at this stage and an agreement drawn up in writing.

At all stages the School will make every reasonable attempt to resolve attendance issues expediently while reminding parents of their statutory responsibilities and involving EWS, EA and DENI as required.

Sixth Form

Summary of attendance actions in Sixth Form

If a pattern of absence continues or the attendance rate **falls below 90%**, except where the absence is clearly the result of illness, for which there is independent evidence, a parental interview will be conducted and documented by your child's Head of Year in School to establish the reason(s) for the absences.

At this meeting the Head of Year will discuss support and set targets for improvement.

Where the strategies in **Stage 2** do not properly address the situation then parents will be written to and invited to attend an Attendance Panel Review meeting with the Principal, Leadership Team or Board of Governors to review their Sixth Form place and plan next steps.

At this meeting a final contract with specific targets will be agreed and signed.

A place in Sixth Form in Wallace is predicated on a young person's willingness to attend regularly and aim for 100% attendance.

The Sixth Form Agreement requires that a young person attends regularly and states clearly that failure to attend regularly, without specific reasons which are verified by independent evidence, can lead to a place being withdrawn.

Monitoring Lateness

At Wallace, punctuality to school is monitored by the Assistant Head of Year in each Year group.

Outside of Class Assembly time, pupils must report to the Front Office and speak to the staff to receive their late slip. This must be done before using the biometric reader.

Pupils arriving late **before 9.15am** will be issued with an **L code** either by their Class Tutor or the biometric reader. The L codes carry a 1-point penalty.

Pupils arriving **after 9.15am** are issued with a **U code** unless a valid reason is provided from a parent/guardian. The U codes carry a 2-point penalty.

Sanctions

When a student receives **10 late points** they will be issued with a Friday detention.

Parents will be informed of the date of this meeting by letter/email by the Assistant Head of Year.

Exeats

Parents are reminded to avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent appointments.

When an absence is absolutely essential and unavoidable an Exeat is required to leave school early. Exeats can only be issued on receipt of a parental note between 8.30-9.00 am.

Pupils granted an Exeat must sign out of school and back in again (if returning) at the Front Office.

Truancy

Truancy from school is a serious offence and will merit a sanction. The level of sanction will be determined by the school's Pastoral Vice Principal in line with the school's Behavioural Management Policy.